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SUBJECT: SPAIN: ENRIQUE IGLESIAS ON IBEROAMERICAN SUMMIT  
AND TROUBLES IN IBEROAMERICA

Classified By: Ambassador Eduardo Aguirre for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

11. (C/NF) SUMMARY. The Ambassador discussed the upcoming Iberoamerican Summit in Montevideo with Iberoamerican Secretary General Enrique Iglesias (protect) on October 17.

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Iglesias also spoke about the friction between Uruguay and Argentina, what it would mean if Raul Castro represents Cuba at the Summit, Venezuela's loss of support among its neighbors, Brazilian President Lula, and Mexico's problems.  
END SUMMARY.

-- The Iberoamerican Summit --

12. (C/NF) Over breakfast at the Ambassador's residence on October 17, Iglesias told the Ambassador and DCM that his first year as Iberoamerican Secretary General has been busy. Now it is even busier as he and the Secretariat staff prepare for the Summit in Montevideo on November 4-5. He lauded the high level of attention that Spain lavishes on this forum, noting that the King, President Zapatero, and new MFA Secretary of State for Latin America Trinidad Jimenez will

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lead a big Spanish delegation to Montevideo. He also said that Spain was giving the Secretariat good support, including a staff of 25. Iglesias said that Spain wants this forum, where it is a big player and everyone is together at the table, to be successful. He said that the annual summit might seem like overkill but is an important way to tie together the many activities that go on throughout the year. While Uruguay is working hard on the Summit preparations, Iglesias said, it is going to be a complex event that will test the host. Not only is Uruguay itself facing particularly difficult relations with Argentina, but there are fires burning all over Latin America.

-- Uruguay --

13. (C/NF) Speaking as an Uruguayan, Iglesias said that Uruguay feels besieged by Argentina. He lamented that the Entre Rios border crossing is closed again, and asked how Mexicans would feel if the US closed the US-Mexico border. Iglesias said that Argentine President Kirchner is being overly aggressive and has become the most hated man in Uruguay. With Brazilian President Lula no longer being helpful in resolving the dispute and Kirchner the source of the problem, a fairly leftist Uruguayan government is being driven towards the US, with which it is keen to deepen trade

ties.

-- Cuba --

¶4. (C/NF) On Cuba, Iglesias said that he has heard that Raul Castro might represent Cuba at the Montevideo Summit, but hasn't confirmed his attendance. Iglesias said that it would be an important sign if Raul were given external exposure at an international forum like this. Nonetheless, Iglesias said that he isn't sure that the Cubans are ready for Raul to be seen as the head of state. While Iglesias hasn't met Raul, he knows the other key players in the current triumvirate: Vice President Carlos Lage and Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque. He judged that while Perez Roque just spews the party line, Lage is trusted by Raul and "a guy that you can talk to."

-- Venezuela --

¶5. (C/NF) Iglesias said that everyone in Latin America is concerned by the behavior of Hugo Chavez, who is becoming increasingly megalomaniacal. Iglesias said that over the years he has spent a lot of time with Chavez, and has recently seen more mistakes and incompetence. He noted that Chavez's UNGA speech destroyed a lot of his support within Latin America. Iglesias said that Chile finally decided to abstain from the UNSC vote out of frustration with Chavez's support of Bolivian outposts on the Chile-Bolivia border.

-- Brazil --

¶6. (C/NF) According to Iglesias, Chavez's financing of seven or eight additional outposts on the Brazil-Bolivia border is now encouraging Lula to turn his back on Chavez. Iglesias seemed confident that Lula would win the second round of the presidential election. He said that a recently re-elected Lula might begin to actively seek to contain Chavez, might well look for a stronger relation with Mexico, and might even

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reach out to the US on trade.

-- Mexico --

¶7. (C/NF) Iglesias worried about the situation in Mexico, which has not been able to consolidate the democratic gains that came with the election of Fox. He said that the instability and lawlessness in Oaxaca are of real concern, though the recent PRI victory in the gubernatorial race in neighboring Tabasco is a positive sign. Iglesias said that Lopez Obrador would have been a bad president but his post-election behavior has been so horrible that he is definitively finished in Mexican politics.

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